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WHAT IS DANCE FUSION?

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores the world where dance, society and even politics meet. The world has started to recognize the combination of dance styles as fusions of these styles. But fusion is not a new concept. The dance world has been fusing styles and ideas since the beginning. One example in modern history can be seen in the Ballet Russe and the many impacts that followed this movement. My personal experience of choreographing a fusion solo is another example of how fusion is used today in the dance world. But while fusion is a common practice in the dance community, fusion is also part of everyday life and our society in general. When fusion is talked about outside of the dance world it is commonly thought of in a scientific scope. If you look at a more scientific definition, fusion is the merging of different elements into union (Fusion- Definition 2013). This can then be directly translated back into the dance world. Where then the division between the two worlds then becomes obsolete.

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## LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL ATTACHMENTS

Indefinite Loss:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SI11jKIG4bk>

Cleave:

<http://youtu.be/XKi2-v4vXYY>

Enough:

[http://youtu.be/d6g4\\_13O04c](http://youtu.be/d6g4_13O04c)

## Chapter 1

### Purpose

The dance world that the average person is familiar with has been recently bombarded with the concept of fusion. You see Contemporary Hip-Hop, Jazz Funk, Modern Ballet, etc on shows like *So You Think You Can Dance* and others with similar concepts. And while they have brought the attention of the public to the dance world, they have also distorted the view of this world by only showing a very small scope of dance material to the general public. These mass public shows have created the illusion that fusion has become this new craze that the world has never been exposed to before. But in order to understand this fad we must first understand what fusion really means. If you look through the history of dance you will see the fusion of dance styles happens over and over again, contrary to the general public's views. When one thinks about fusion, it should be understood that one is actually talking about evolution and the integration of ideas from all different areas. Fusion does not only pertain to the movement or the style but goes beyond just physical activity and incorporates ideas, society and the choreographers' surroundings. This paper will examine the different, cultural, societal, political, and even international influences that allowed for the fusion of worlds (dance, common, and political) to combine to make a pathway for what we call dance today.

In order to prove this point I have decided to engage in a single span in modern dance history in order to give an adequate analysis of many different influences. While there are so many other examples that could be found in every style of dance, the amount of space that would be required for this comprehensive analysis would have to include volumes, which is not feasible at this time. Therefore, it is possible to see fusion located in other styles like in Hip Hop and Jazz. One example of fusion can be found in Katherine Dunham, a choreographer. She is the essence of

what I mean by fusion. She began studying ballet in 1928. In 1935 she studied dance in the West Indies after receiving a grant from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. In 1936 she traveled to Haiti and received her bachelors degree in Philosophy from the University of Chicago. Then in 1942 she did her first United States tour on Broadway. She was able to combine her knowledge of cultural Anthropology with dance movements, while she merged African with Caribbean and even incorporated jazz and ballet technique (*Katherine Dunham Centers for Arts and Humanities* 2011). In my perspective it is this collection of influences and information by one person that then incorporates all of the elements and creates a piece out of their union is the essence of fusion. While on the other hand you can have collaboration, which is when you have people from different backgrounds bringing their individual influences to the table. While I would argue that part of learning and collecting knowledge is the process of working and collaborating with others, it is not fusion; collaborations ends after the piece, while a fusion continually grows and accumulates on top of itself.

While many events are considered fusions, I have decided to dive into the Ballet Russe and Diaghilev, the creator of the company and a master of fusion. I will expose the many different angles of influences that came from this time period. This brief snap shot into modern dance history should bring to light what I mean about influences and it will give you a better picture of the true meaning of fusion. After I have examined this historical snap shot I will explain my process of fusion. I will show how not only did the styles (Hip Hop, Jazz, and Modern) affect my solo, but the events around my life are also imbedded within the piece. I will then draw the connections to why this practice of fusion is important, and why, in my mind, it happens more than realized by society today.

## Chapter 2

### A Deeper Look into the Ballet Russe and Modern Dance

#### **Brief History Background:**

In order to understand how and why politics, culture and society are important to the world of dance and especially the idea of dance fusion, one must have an understanding of the general background of the time. The very basic outline of the war goes as followed: In 1904-1905 there was the Russo-Japanese War, which Russia lost, and then in 1911-1912 there was the Turkish-Italian War. In 1914 the ‘Great Powers’ were so close to war due to all the tension that on August 1, Germany and Hungary declared war on Russia, while France remained neutral. The war officially ended in 1920.

While World War I was going on the “civilization was reduced to its raw elements” (Dils and Cooper 2001, 18). Everyone (including governments) was suspicious of all activities. There was an extreme amount of tension in the air. Societies in communist countries were based on hierarchies; the higher up on the social or political ladder the more respect, information, and responsibilities were given. These hierarchies were designed so that everyone within the society always fell superior or inferior to each other. This created a world of pleasing and suppressing people above and below you and the social and political ladders, which in return only caused more tension as people tried to climb the ladder and achieve more power (Simirenko 1974). There were also revolts and riots to try and break out of the hierarchies and suppression. This was a time of high volatility both in the interactions between countries as well in the stabilization within the countries. Hundreds of thousands of men lost their lives in the wars surrounding this time period, and yet all the while there was this fascination with avant-garde and everything that was new was exciting to the general public.

### **Influences:**

The Ballet Russe was “built on the idea of synthesis: its theatrical presentations resulted from the collaboration of choreographer, composer, librettist, and designer” (Dils and Cooper 2001, 34). Diaghilev valued the idea of collaboration between people involved in many different art forms (painting, poetry, etc) and he was able to fuse the ideas from all of these different people. He himself was not a dancer, but he created a dance company that changed the path of dance. He surrounded himself with people who had avant-garde ideas, and was not afraid to introduce new ideas to the public at large.

The Ballets Russe was known for fusing elements of the fine arts to its stage work (Purvis, Rand, and Weinstein 2009), so naturally one could conceive that a major influence for Diaghilev was the fine arts which included paintings, sculptures, architecture, composing, and many more. Diaghilev was drawn to all kinds of art. He was moved by Stravinsky’s first sketches of *Svadebka*; drawn to Italian art; and enthralled by various instruments (mostly percussion). It has been recorded that Velazquez’s famous painting *Las Meninas* inspired one ballet; (Scheijen 2010) and he was extremely fond of Picasso’s work, which on multiple occasions used his art as inspiration.

Diaghilev also traveled all over the world for both business and pleasure. He was influenced by Rome, Bulgaria, Greece and even America (especially Broadway). Diaghilev and his dancers traveled to France, Spain, and Germany, with his dancers calling home all over the hemisphere. Although, Russia was officially called their homeland, during the war the company was not able to travel as freely in their home country (Scheijen 2010). The company ended up spending most of the war in Spain because of its neutrality, where they were in hibernation (Dils and Cooper 2001).

Other ballet lovers were also influences to Diaghilev. Although Diaghilev himself was not a dancer, he was a businessman and a great intellect. He would talk to many ballet lovers



about their art form and the trends it was following. While Diaghilev himself did not care particularly about where ballet was going as a whole, he did talk passionately about the art form and was informed about the paths it was taking (Scheijen 2010).

The war itself was an influence. While as discussed later in this paper Diaghilev did not speak out against the government, the war impacted his company. For example, one of his choreographers, Nijinsky, was experimenting with movement and needed a way to document his work, so he came up with a system of movement notation. Officials were suspicious of this notation, thinking it was some sort of code. He was detained in Hungary and was late to arrive on tour in America that season (Dils and Cooper 2001, 19).

While most influence came from outside forces, there were also some internal affairs that influenced the direction of the company. Fokine, original lead choreographer, left the company in 1912; some argue it was due to his “jealousy over Diaghilev’s interest in developing Nijinsky as a choreographer” (Reynolds and McCormick 2003, 53).

It is clear to say that there were influences from not only all over the world but also from all different aspects of life. There is not a single person, place, or even point in time that can be said to be the influence for the Ballets Russe. It is clear that the Ballets Russe itself was a complete fusion of ideas, people, and experiences. Everything Diaghilev and his company came into contact with had an influence on the work that was produced.

**“Parade”:**

Speaking of multiple influences, one of the most important dances of the Ballets Russe was “Parade”, created in the winter of 1916-1917. Massine choreographed this piece, but Cocteau, Picasso (with visual concepts) and Satie (music) collaborated with Massine in order to make this masterpiece. The men, including Diaghilev decided to set the scene in front of a circus tent, which Picasso loved and even suggested that the costumes for the piece be “cubist style” (Matheson 1992, 109). The name for the ballet was based on the name “parade” given to the

actual fairground performers in an effort to lure audiences to their booths. “Parade” was not designed to be a satire on popular art but an attempt to transform it into a totally new form. The collaborators were interested in making something new and “representative of (their) own age” (Matheson 1992, 112).

While the piece turned out to be a masterpiece there were conflicts on the way between the men. For example, Cocteau suggested that megaphones be given to some of the performers to shout spoken word from, but Diaghilev completely disagreed, and in the end won the argument. Although he did allow Satie to incorporate realistic sound effects into the score of the music as a compromise (Matheson 1992). This single ballet is amazing example of a fusion of ideas from different artists, whose area of expertise were in all different art forms. While it was collaboration between the different men, Diaghilev overall synthesized the piece when he created the movement, which fused together everyone’s different ideas for the piece. While all of the men had their own reasons for being involved with the piece, they all had a vested interest in the relationship and collaborative process.

### **Homosexuality:**

Although Diaghilev was not a dancer, he was the owner of the company, therefore, much of what Diaghilev did reflected back onto the company’s reputation; homosexuality being one of the reflections placed on the Ballet Russe. In 1906-1907 Diaghilev had a relationship with his cousin, Dima, as well as both men having relationships on the side. Diaghilev would later have many sexual relations with many of his choreographers, and if he didn’t he was rumored to be having them. But during this time the political situation was tense, which had an effect on the art world, as well as everyday life. This was a time of riots and revolts. Protests broke out with people craving more freedoms and less supervision. For example, students of the Petersburg conservatory demanded a greater say when it came to decision-making and the abolishment of corporal punishment (Scheijen 2010).

Because this tension seeped into the art world, Diaghilev knew what was going on around him, but he had to remain extremely cautious. Even though he supported the radical changes and criticisms of the regime; he never made an open criticism of the government. Diaghilev knew that it was not unthinkable for the authorities to come arrest him under the penal code for his “deviant sexual behavior” and start to “tackle the decline of public morals” (Scheijen 2010, 144). During the time before the war he knew that if he wished to remain working in Russia, he would need the help of both the government and the courts. And he had every reason to keep his high connections because, illegal or not, a fairly open homosexual subculture had emerged, mainly in St. Petersburg, and Diaghilev was a predominant figure in that circle (Scheijen 2010).

It was clear that there was a greater tolerance in Europe, but the “openly homosexual behavior was sparking backlash of criticisms and repugnance” (Scheijen 2010, 145). Due to the growing controversy, there were many studies and journals that came out of this time that tried to explain this ‘deviant’ behavior. One man, Dr. Hirschfeld, came up with the argument that homosexuality was actually the 3<sup>rd</sup> sex. His argument started with the idea that everything in nature occurs on a gradient scale or degrees and the thought of the very polarized male/ female does not actually fit. He argues that sexuality varies in degrees and that because of this scale there can conceivably be a 3<sup>rd</sup> sex of homosexuals (“Chapter 7” 2006).

Although Diaghilev was not the company, Diaghilev was the face and because of this he had to tread lightly. His reputation was the company’s reputation. There were no outrageous political dances, and Diaghilev did not speak out against the government. He knew the line that could not be crossed, and he obeyed it.

#### **American Issues:**

While Russia was dealing with homosexuality America also had a huge issue. America at this time, while not surrounded by war, had racism. While touring in America, Diaghilev was forced to make cuts from both Scheherazade and L’Apres-midi due to the fact that there was

“blacked-up men embracing white women” (Scheijen 2010, 319.) While in Diaghilev’s mind what is good enough for royalty, should be good enough for America, he did not realize or understand that America was still in the mindset of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (1896) and the “one-drop rule”. According to the one-drop rule if you were  $1/16^{\text{th}}$  = one-drop African American than you were considered black, and did not have the same rights as a white person (Kuenz 1997).

Therefore, when Americans saw white women and black men together they could not get over the taboo, causing Diaghilev to change his ballets. Although once the American tour was over he could reverse his cuts, Diaghilev was forced to subdue to American social beliefs of the time.

### **Russia’s Thoughts:**

While all over the Europe and America there was a huge acceptance of the Ballets Russe, in Russia it was a slightly different story. Diaghilev’s company the Ballets Russe never performed in Russia, even though it was called the company’s homeland, but the family members and friends of the company members followed the company’s travels closely. But the general population of Russia was a different story. In general, there seemed to be a lack of interest in the company as a whole, possibly because they only toured outside of Russia. Diaghilev’s reputation on the other had did follow him, even back to Russia. It was this same reputation that allowed him to be a successful businessman. His name and the prestige of the Ballet Russe allowed him to secure funds for his private enterprise. But while his reputation allowed for him to receive funds, it didn’t always make him the most popular man.

“In Russia, art had always existed in close conjunction with politics, and the ballet was no exception” (Jarvinen 2008, 19.) Due to this close relationship the ballet was a common form of entertainment, as well as being associated with the court and royalty. Because of the popularity in the society, there were always Russian reviews, which were published in the press. But during this time in Russia, the Russian ballet was divided into the ‘old ballet’ of Marius Petipa, and the ‘new ballet’ of Gorsky, whom was then head of the Moscow Company. It was common practice

for reviews to compare the companies and the works of each company. The Russian reviewers would commonly compare different casts of the same work, but this was not how reviews were done in the West, which only added to the distance of the Ballet Russe from Russia (Jarvinen 2008). For the Russians the Ballet Russe was not even considered a top company to talk about. While they were experimenting with new movement and exploring different influences, the Russians were stuck in their ways and values the ballet style they had created, which followed tradition.

The Russian papers did follow the Ballet Russes' tours, but to many Russians the company was seen as "exporting an image of Russia" (Jarvinen 2008, 22). Then due to the lack of attention and admiration for the Ballets Russe from Russia there was a backlash from France. So while the Ballet Russe did not fit in with the Russian ballets, the French dance community didn't accept them either. During this time "the difference between the civilized France and the still barbarian Russians is constituted as an irrevocable racial divide" (Jarvinen 2008, 25). This divide, while stemming from a long history, came from the French acceptance of the Ballets Russe and the Russian disassociation (Jarvinen 2008). This caused the Ballet Russe to be left in middle unclaimed by either major ballet ideology.

Things only got worse for Diaghilev once he owned his private company for his image in Russia. There was a clear divide seen in the propaganda of the time between the Ballets Russe and the Imperial Theatres, and the dismissal of Nijinsky from the Imperial Theatres only made matters worse. Once Diaghilev created his official company the Imperial Theatres felt as if he stole many dancers they had trained right out from underneath them. The Imperial Theatres had supported Diaghilev in the beginning, even facilitating the creation and staging of many pieces, and Diaghilev turned around and took their star performers with him (Jarvinen 2008).

While it is clear that there was tension between Diaghilev's Ballet Russe and Russia, it is also clear that both were aware of the other. There was this sense that Russia did not really accept

the Ballet Russes, which also allowed and facilitated the approval of the Western critics. It is also clear that there is a substantial amount of true Russian influence integrated into the Ballets Russes, but they never performed in their home country.

**Germany:**

Due to the constant tension, which eventually turned into war, Germany had a slightly different experience when it came to the world of dance. While some things were similar, like the lack of desire to be involved with politics by most dancers, there were differences as well; where as Diaghilev could not speak out against the government for fear of incarceration, choreographers and a few dancers in Germany did just that. One example is Jean Weidt, who spent his dance career furthering causes. In Berlin he organized dance troupes of young workers to perform at Communist Party rallies, and was known as a Red Dancer. He later went into exile once Hitler took control (Dils and Cooper 2001).

Just as the people in Germany took different approaches when it came to speaking out against the government and politics, the government's reaction was different. In the 1930's the Third Reich came under the authority of Josef Goebbels' Ministry of Culture. It was at this time ballet schools started to become standardized. While many were upset with the force-feeding of traditional ballet others agreed because for the first time the government decided to fund dance, as a form of art (Dils and Cooper 2001). Due to the standardization and national support ballet received a huge boom in interest and public support, which was also facilitated by the Nazis and National Socialism support; although it was only the standardized traditional ballet that received this support (Dils and Cooper 2001). Other choreographers such as Wigman and Laban were put under suspicion due to the new record-keeping system Laban had created for recording dances in Laban notation. Laban's books were declared anti-German, and he was even held in custody by the Nazis. Just like the Germans did not accept Laban's work, the dance form called Ausdruckstanz, which reflected cultural tensions on the time, was also rejected his work and

almost pushed his work out of the region under the reign of Hitler (Reynolds and McCormick 2003).

While there are clear parallels between Germany and what the Ballets Russe experienced, it must be noted that this was all during the time leading up to, during, and after World War I. There are strong correlations that can be seen between the countries because they were both placed in the same time with the same tension building around them. It is also to be understood that during this time, dancers knew about what was going on in the different countries, and were influenced by the restrictions placed on them during, before, and after the war.

### **Legacies:**

At large the Ballets Russe was known for its avant-garde movements, and synthesis of all fine art forms, but the company and its members left other legacies behind as well. Fokine, for instance, compressed his ballets into single acts, which change the whole idea of how long a ballet needed to be. Nijinsky broke completely from tradition and did not use ballet steps; instead he used walking, running, and more pedestrian movements. “Nijinsky paved the way for virtually all the modern dance developments of the twentieth century” (Reynolds and McCormick 2003, 56). But with close examination they left behind another treasure, collaboration and fusion. This dance company not only was able to create pieces that are still performed today, but set a tone for working with the best and incorporating all of life’s experiences into the company.

### **Results:**

The Ballets Russe was known for fusing “the most avant-garde, groundbreaking movements in dance, choreography, art, design and costume into unique and stunning productions” (Purvis, Rand, and Winestein 2009, inside cover). The company, Diaghilev and all of the amazing people he collaborated with created a visual revolution. They were able to change the way ballets operate. The ballet was no longer stuck in traditions and focused on telling stories to the audience. There was a shift of influence. What once focused on love, romance, and

heartbreaking stories, now revolved around poetry, sculpture, architecture, paintings, other cultures, political issues, activism, etc. It is now more than just the choreography that is important. The inspiration behind the movement, the set piece, the costumes, music, and even location are all-important to the ballet experience. This idea changed ballet and changed dance all together. Because of the path Diaghilev and his company set dance has been able to continue to grow, expand, change and fuse. As stated before, the idea of fusion is not a new concept, but it is a concept that has allowed dance to morph and change as the people in society have changed and evolved. New ideas have been accepted and the influences of society have been accepted, and even embraced by the world of dance.



## **Chapter 3**

### **My Experience with Dance Fusion**

#### **Stage One:**

The first step in my personal dance fusion experience was to learn three different solos in three different dance styles. I decided to ask three faculty members at Penn State to create solos for me in different genres. Elisha Halpin created a modern solo for me, Michele Dunleavy created the jazz solo, and then I worked with Kikoria Franklin and used her class material from Advanced Hip Hop Fall 2012 semester for the Hip Hop material. I worked on the Hip Hop material for the semester in class and decided to use two different combinations for material to draw from. During this first semester I also worked on my jazz and modern solos, meeting with both Michele and Elisha for private rehearsals and then working on the combinations individually.

#### **Stage Two:**

After I learned all of the material I started to create my fusion solo. I started the process of creating choreography with picking a song because I like the movement to be married to the music. I found a song by Lindsey Stirling called “Crystallized” which was a mixture of dubstep and violins. This song was very intriguing because it had both the classical violin, but it also had dubstep, which in the music world is relatively new. I then decided that I wanted the movement not only influenced by the different styles of dance (the solos and Hip Hop class material), but I wanted it to also have a story behind it. I decided to create a piece about my best friend who served a year over in Iraq. It was a time in my life when I was unsure if I would ever see him again. Fortunately he did return home, but I named my piece “Indefinite Loss” because there was always this possibility that he would be gone from this world. This uneasy and uncertain feeling was a side effect of war for me; but I felt like audience members would be able to relate to this

“out of control” feeling about important people in their lives, allowing them to connect to the piece. I found several pieces/ poems that were about friends going to war and losing friends. I pulled a list of thirty of my favorite words from these poems and used the words to direct my movements. I gave the list to my rehearsal director and she gave me the words in any order she wanted. I created the piece with using the three different styles as a vocabulary system of movement that was then influenced by the words from the poems.

As I started creating the solo I also was influenced by the history of each style. Hip Hop has always been about being yourself and I wanted to keep the personal essences to my fusion. Closely related to that I wanted the modern movements to keep its exploration and self-expression elements. Modern has always pushed the avant-garde aspect and I wanted my solo to not be something that I have seen performed at Penn State. I wanted to keep the style aspect of jazz. All of these influences shaped my movement decisions. While it wasn't picking one move from jazz, and then picking one movement from modern; the movement progressed with a more natural flow and the essence of each style driving the solo forward. The music was also very helpful in dictating the more influential style for the section of the piece. For example, if there was a heavy bass or the dubstep kicked in then there would be more of a Hip Hop undertone to the movement. There might be more reverberation or isolation of the movement rather than more swift and sweeping motions.

### **Stage Three:**

Once everything was created the final stage was the performance. I performed the pieces at the end of the fall 2012 semester in the Winter Showcase. I then took the videos of the performance and created clips that can be watched through YouTube. The solo performances can be seen by going to the links listed under the supplemental attachments found at the beginning of this paper. I also got a chance to review the performance and make slight changes and revisions to

my choreography. I was then able to perform the piece again in the informal concert at the American College Dance Festival, which was hosted by Hofstra University spring 2013.

The experience was so new and exciting. I have created solo choreography form myself before but never in a context like this, where I worked within set limits. This process was both challenging, because it was new, and easier at the same time because I had specific limits to work under. Usually with choreography you can start anywhere and do anything, but by working within the different styles as a vocabulary system of movement and then telling the story of my friend going to war, I had a starting point and bumper rails to keep me on a track.

**My Reflection:**

Going through this process of crating a solo I have had to reflect upon what influences me at this current point in time. I looked at the culture I am currently engrossed in. I am a college senior right on the edge of graduation and moving onto the next chapter of my life. In the society we live in today the transition from student to the “real world” is a huge change. It is a scary and exciting time in my life that has greatly influenced my decisions, as I have had to prepare for this event. One of the great aspects of my thesis work has been a conclusion to my time not only dancing at Penn State but also a conclusion of being a student here as well.

But other than a conclusion to this chapter in my life, what has directly influenced me during this process of creating a solo? I decided to start by analyzing my surroundings within the Penn State community; while I am a student first, I am also a dancer. I am not just involved in one style of dance or one single program on campus. I take classes from faculty and students from all different backgrounds of training. I am a student and a choreographer/ teacher to other students. By allowing myself to be involved in this community by so many different avenues I have allowed myself to not be limited to one pathway into the community. I see choreography as not only as a student, but also as a choreographer and as a judge. I am able to critique my work because of the multiple angles from which I am able to look at a piece.

If I am then able to step back even farther I can look at the influences that impact my generation as a whole. I feel that we are a group of young people who are very self-expressive, open to new ideas, and still very connected to one another through technology. I noticed my choice in music has a direct correlation to this generational idea. My music was different and yet trending. It was something that spoke to me on a personal level but also allowed the audience to become involved in the music as well. I would also argue that my movement also reflects this concept. It was very personal but expressive to the audience in a way that allowed them to interact and become involved in the piece. I think then, if you look at the styles I decided to incorporate as well, it shows the same trend within both modern and Hip Hop. Modern is based on self-expression and individuality and Hip Hop has always prided itself on being the voice of the dancer. All of these aspects allowed for the audience to relate not only to me as the performer but to the piece and the message behind the movement.

My last reflection was on the reactions of the audience. I believe most people who have studied dance styles and techniques were able to see the different stylistic influences throughout the piece. Strict Hip Hop dancers were able to appreciate how I took the Hip Hop style and incorporated jazz, modern, and myself into the piece. And the same goes for more classically trained dancers, who were able to see my individual voice while being able to pick out technical aspects of the piece. While non-dancers in the audience might not know the technical aspects or be able to identify the different styles within the piece they were able to see how the fusion was constructed from the original solos that were also presented in the show. But most importantly I believe the audience was able to understand the concept behind the dance, which to me is the most important part. If you are not able to move the audience in some way you have not communicated correctly with them; a performance should be some form of a conversation between the performer and the audience.

## Chapter 4

### Why is Fusion Important?

Why is fusion an important concept? In the dance world this idea of converging ideas, beliefs, communities, traditions, and even dance movements has been the driving force behind dance. Even the commonly accepted form of Jazz is a fusion when we look back at its history. Dancers and choreographers have been exploring the world of bringing together life and dance for years. They are always pushing the dimensions of dance and stepping out of the box. For this art form, exploration and expression is everything. You can think about dance as an every changing entity. It is constantly moving and shifting directions, breaking off of one another and then joining back together years later. There are many variations of the same style and then there are polar opposite branches still within the same style of dance. And while we tend to think of fusion as a new art form within the dance world, after close examination we can see that it is not new at all. It has actually been the push and the drive that causes dance to evolve and constantly change.

But does fusion function outside of the dance world? Because I am not only a dancer I would like to argue that fusion is not a unique concept that only has validity in the dance world. If we take the concept and break it down to the collection and the synthesizing of new ideas, societies, traditions, beliefs, communities, or even politics, then we can see fusion in every aspect of life. This exact idea of the “melting pot” is the traditional concept of America. If you look at our country we are made up of groups of people who are constantly in interactions with one another and therefore constantly taking in new information, which changes who we are. This constant changing, shifting, and layering not only happens on an individual or personal level but on a national or even international level as well. If this were not the case we would still be under

Plessey v. Ferguson. But we as a group we have changed. New ideas have been introduced and we have shifted to a different viewpoint in politics. You can see this every changing and morphing of practices in almost every aspect of life. We cannot escape it and nor should we try. The culmination of ideas and bring new beliefs and ideas to the table are a healthy part of growth. If anything, I argue, we need to bring in more ideas of people who have not been able to share their voice yet. Everyone should be contribution to this evolution of ideas and policies that allows us as a group to move in a positive direction.

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# ACADEMIC VITA

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## Education

B.A., Philosophy, 2013, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

B.A., Integrative Arts, 2013, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

## Honors and Awards

- Graduation with Honors 2013
- Deans List: Fall 2009, Fall 2010, Spring 2011, Spring 2012, Fall 2012
- Paterno Fellows Program: Acceptance Fall 2009
- Abroad to Italy: Summer 2011

## Association Memberships/Activities

- Ambitions (Fall 2010- Spring 2013)  

Ambitions is an on campus dance group. Held the secretary position spring 2012- fall 2012. Required to email and inform all members of upcoming activities hosted by the group. Choreographed and performed with the group as well. Held the position of historian spring 2013. Required to keep track of all performances, master classes, and fundraisers held and hosted by the group.
- University Dance Company (Fall 2010- Spring 2013)  

University Dance Company is a student/ paraprofessional company. Required to audition, choreograph, travel and perform.

## Professional Experience

- Presentation of choreography and choreographic process: April 2013